

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Please cancel Claims 1-96 and add Claims 97-164 as follows:

1-96. (Canceled)

97. (New) A method for determining if a first agent should service work items of a first work type in a work processing facility, comprising:

5 (a) an agent assignor selecting the first agent, wherein the first work type and/or a selected work item in the first work type has an associated first dynamic preference value and the first agent has an associated first agent preference value and first agent threshold value for the first work type and wherein the first dynamic preference value reflects the work processing facility's preference for processing of work items of the first work type
10 in comparison to processing work items of work types other than the first work type;

(b) the agent assignor determining, as a function of the first dynamic preference and first agent preference values, a first agent composite preference value for the first work type;

15 (c) the agent assignor comparing the first agent composite preference value with the first agent threshold value, wherein the first agent threshold value measures the first agent's lack of proficiency in servicing the first work type and/or selected work item in the first work type;

20 (d) the agent assignor, when the first agent composite preference value exceeds the first agent threshold value, finding the first agent to be qualified to service the first work type; and

(e) the agent assignor, when the first agent composite preference value is less than the first agent threshold value, finding the first agent to be unqualified to service the first work type.

5 98. (New) The method of claim 97, wherein the first dynamic preference value is a function of at least one of a service level value for the work type, a queue condition for the work type, an alarm condition for the work type, and an answer delay for the work type, a desired service level for the work type, a call abandonment rate for the work type, and an operator intervention value for the work type.

 99. (New) The method of claim 98, wherein the first dynamic preference value is a function of at least one of a service level value for the work type, a queue condition for the work type, and an answer delay for the work type.

 100. (New) The method of claim 97, wherein the first dynamic and agent preference values are nonzero and wherein the first agent composite preference value function is the sum of the first agent's preference value and the first dynamic preference value.

 101. (New) The method of claim 97, wherein the first dynamic and agent preference values are nonzero and wherein the first agent composite preference value is the product of the first agent preference value and the first dynamic preference value.

 102. (New) The method of claim 97, wherein the first agent preference value is a function of a personal desirability of the first agent for servicing the first work type.

 103. (New) The method of claim 97, wherein in step (d) the first agent is added by the agent assignor to a pool of agents qualified to service the first work type and in step (e) the first agent is not added by the agent assignor to the pool of agents.

104. (New) The method of claim 97, wherein the first dynamic and agent preference values are nonzero and wherein the first dynamic preference value is a function of a first service level value for the first work type, the first service level value being measured over a selected period of time.

105. (New) The method of claim 97, wherein the first dynamic and agent preference values are nonzero and further comprising:

(f) the agent assignor, when the first agent composite value is equal to the first agent threshold value, finding the first agent to be qualified to service the first work type.

106. (New) The method of claim 97, further including the agent assignor not performing step (b) and finding the first agent to be qualified to service the first work type, when the first agent's preference value for the first work type is greater than the first agent threshold value for the first work type.

107. (New) The method of claim 97, further comprising before step (b):

(f) determining a state of the work processing facility;

(g) based on the state of the work processing facility, selecting a first composite preference value function from among a plurality of possible preference value function, wherein the first composite preference value function is used to determine the first agent composite preference value.

108. (New) The method of claim 107, wherein the state of the work processing facility is a function of a degree of achievement of one or more objectives.

109. (New) The method of claim 108, wherein the one or more objectives comprise at least one of a selected degree of allocation of service level performance in

excess of an associated goal, a selected degree of utilization of agents, a selected degree of dampening of fluctuations in service level attainment, a selected degree of dampening of fluctuations in server idleness, and a selected mode-specific behavior.

110. (New) A computer readable medium comprising executable instructions to perform the steps of claim 97.

111. (New) A system for determining whether a first agent should service work items of a first work type in a work processing facility, comprising:

agent assigning means for (a) selecting the first agent, wherein the first work type and/or a selected work item in the first work type has an associated first dynamic

5 preference value and the first agent has an associated first agent preference value and first agent threshold value for the first work type and wherein the first dynamic preference

value reflects the work processing facility's preference for processing of work items of the first work type in comparison to processing work items of work types other than the

first work type; (b) determining, as a function of the first dynamic preference and first

10 agent preference values, a first agent composite preference value for the first work type;

(c) comparing the first agent composite preference value with the first agent threshold value, wherein the first agent threshold value measures the first agent's lack of

proficiency in servicing the first work type and/or selected work item in the first work

type; (d) when the first agent composite preference value exceeds the first agent threshold

15 value, finding the first agent to be qualified to service the first work type; and (e) when

the first agent composite preference value is less than the first agent threshold value,

finding the first agent to be unqualified to service the first work type.

112. (New) The system of claim 111, wherein the first dynamic preference value is a function of at least one a plurality of a service level value for the work type, a

queue condition for the work type, an alarm condition for the work type, an answer delay
for the work type, and a desired service level for the work type, a call abandonment rate
5 for the work type, and an operator intervention value for the work type.

113. (New) The system of claim 111, wherein the first dynamic preference
value is a function of a plurality of a service level value for the work type, a queue
condition for the work type, an answer delay for the work type, and a desired service level
for the work type.

114. (New) The system of claim 111, wherein the first dynamic and agent
preference values are nonzero and wherein the first agent composite preference value
function is the sum of the first agent's preference value and the first dynamic preference
value.

115. (New) The system of claim 111, wherein the first dynamic and agent
preference values are nonzero and wherein the first agent composite preference value is
the product of the first agent preference value and the first dynamic preference value.

116. (New) The system of claim 111, wherein the first agent preference value is
a function of a personal desirability of the first agent for servicing the first work type.

117. (New) The system of claim 111, wherein in function (d) the first agent is
added by the agent assigning means to a pool of agents qualified to service the first work
type and in function (e) the first agent is not added by the agent assigning means to the
pool of agents.

118. (New) The system of claim 111, wherein the first dynamic and agent preference values are nonzero and wherein the first dynamic preference value is a function of a first service level value for the first work type, the first service level value being measured over a selected period of time.

119. (New) The system of claim 111, wherein the agent assigning means, when the first agent composite value is equal to the first agent threshold value, finds the first agent to be qualified to service the first work type.

120. (New) The system of claim 111, further including the agent assigning means not performing operation (b) and finding the first agent to be qualified to service the first work type, when the first agent's preference value for the first work type is greater than the first agent threshold value for the first work type.

121. (New) The system of claim 111, further comprising:
composite preference evaluator means for determining a state of the work processing facility; and, based on the state of the work processing facility, selecting a first composite preference value function from among a plurality of possible preference value function, wherein the first composite preference value function is used to determine the first agent composite preference value.

122. (New) The method of claim 121, wherein the state of the work processing facility is a function of a degree of achievement of one or more objectives.

123. (New) The method of claim 122, wherein the one or more objectives comprise at least one of a selected degree of allocation of service level performance in excess of an associated goal, a selected degree of utilization of agents, a selected degree

of dampening of fluctuations in service level attainment, a selected degree of dampening
5 of fluctuations in server idleness, and a selected mode-specific behavior.

124. (New) A system for determining whether a first agent should service work
items of a first work type in a work processing facility, comprising:

an agent assignor operable to (a) select the first agent, wherein the first work type
and/or a selected work item in the first work type has an associated first dynamic
5 preference value and the first agent has an associated first agent preference value and first
agent threshold value for the first work type and wherein the first dynamic preference
value reflects the work processing facility's preference for processing of work items of
the first work type in comparison to processing work items of work types other than the
first work type; (b) determine, as a function of the first dynamic preference and first agent
10 preference values, a first agent composite preference value for the first work type; (c)
compare the first agent composite preference value with the first agent threshold value,
wherein the first agent threshold value measures the first agent's lack of proficiency in
servicing the first work type and/or selected work item in the first work type; (d) when the
first agent composite preference value exceeds the first agent threshold value, find the
15 first agent to the qualified to service the first work type; and (e) when the first agent
composite preference value is less than the first agent threshold value, find the first agent
to be unqualified to service the first work type.

125. (New) The system of claim 124, wherein the first dynamic preference
value is a function of at least one a plurality of a service level value for the work type, a
queue condition for the work type, an alarm condition for the work type, an answer delay
for the work type, and a desired service level for the work type, a call abandonment rate
5 for the work type, and an operator intervention value for the work type.

126. (New) The system of claim 124, wherein the first dynamic preference value is a function of a plurality of a service level value for the work type, a queue condition for the work type, an answer delay for the work type, and a desired service level for the work type.

127. (New) The system of claim 124, wherein the first dynamic and agent preference values are nonzero and wherein the first agent composite preference value function is the sum of the first agent's preference value and the first dynamic preference value.

128. (New) The system of claim 124, wherein the first dynamic and agent preference values are nonzero and wherein the first agent composite preference value is the product of the first agent preference value and the first dynamic preference value.

129. (New) The system of claim 124, wherein the first agent preference value is a function of a personal desirability of the first agent for servicing the first work type.

130. (New) The system of claim 124, wherein in operation (d) the first agent is added by the agent assignor to a pool of agents qualified to service the first work type and in operation (e) the first agent is not added by the agent assignor to the pool of agents.

131. (New) The system of claim 124, wherein the first dynamic and agent preference values are nonzero and wherein the first dynamic preference value is a function of a first service level value for the first work type, the first service level value being measured over a selected period of time.

132. (New) The system of claim 124, wherein the first dynamic and agent preference values are nonzero and wherein the agent assignor, when the first agent composite value is equal to the first agent threshold value, finds the first agent to be qualified to service the first work type.

133. (New) The system of claim 124, further including the agent assignor not performing operation (b) and finding the first agent to be qualified to service the first work type, when the first agent's preference value for the first work type is greater than the first agent threshold value for the first work type.

134. (New) The system of claim 124, further comprising:
a composite preference evaluator operable to determine a state of the work processing facility; and, based on the state of the work processing facility, select a first composite preference value function from among a plurality of possible preference value function, wherein the first composite preference value function is used to determine the first agent composite preference value.

135. (New) The method of claim 134, wherein the state of the work processing facility is a function of a degree of achievement of one or more objectives.

136. (New) The method of claim 135, wherein the one or more objectives comprise at least one of a selected degree of allocation of service level performance in excess of an associated goal, a selected degree of utilization of agents, a selected degree of dampening of fluctuations in service level attainment, a selected degree of dampening of fluctuations in server idleness, and a selected mode-specific behavior.

137. (New) A method for servicing work items in a contact center, comprising:

(a) selecting a first agent and a first work type and/or a first work item of the first work type;

(b) determining a state of the contact center;

5 (c) based on the determined state of the contact center, selecting a composite preference value function from among a plurality of differing composite preference value functions, each composite preference value function being a function of a dynamic preference value and an agent preference value;

10 (d) determining a composite preference value using the selected composite preference value function, wherein the determined composite preference value is associated with at least one of (i) the first work type, (ii) the first agent, and (iii) the first work item; and

15 (e) based on a comparison of the determined composite preference value with a threshold value, assigning the first agent to service contacts of the first work type and/or the first work item.

138. (New) The method of claim 137, wherein the state of the work processing facility is a function of a degree of achievement of one or more objectives.

139. (New) The method of claim 138, wherein the one or more objectives comprise at least one of a selected degree of allocation of service level performance in excess of an associated goal, a selected degree of utilization of agents, a selected degree of dampening of fluctuations in service level attainment, a selected degree of dampening
5 of fluctuations in server idleness, and a selected mode-specific behavior.

140. (New) The method of claim 137, wherein the first work type and/or the first work item has an associated first dynamic preference value and the first agent has an associated first agent preference value and first agent threshold value for the first work

5 typ, wherein the first dynamic preference value reflects the contact center's preference for processing of work items of the first work type in comparison to processing work items of work types other than the first work type, and wherein the first agent threshold value measures the first agent's lack of proficiency in servicing the first work type and/or selected work item in the first work type.

141. (New) The method of claim 140, further comprising:

(f) determining, as a function of the first dynamic preference and first agent preference values, a first agent composite preference value for the first work type;

5 (g) comparing the first agent composite preference value with the first agent threshold value;

(h) when the first agent composite preference value exceeds the first agent threshold value, finding the first agent to be qualified to service the first work type; and

(i) when the first agent composite preference value is less than the first agent threshold value, finding the first agent to be unqualified to service the first work type.

142. (New) The method of claim 141, wherein the first dynamic preference value is a function of at least one of a service level value for the work type, a queue condition for the work type, an alarm condition for the work type, and an answer delay for the work type, a desired service level for the work type, a call abandonment rate for the
5 work type, and an operator intervention value for the work type.

143. (New) The method of claim 141, wherein the first dynamic preference value is a function of at least one of a service level value for the work type, a queue condition for the work type, and an answer delay for the work type.

144. (New) The method of claim 141, wherein the first dynamic and agent preference values are nonzero and wherein the first agent composite preference value function is the sum of the first agent's preference value and the first dynamic preference value.

145. (New) The method of claim 141, wherein the first dynamic and agent preference values are nonzero and wherein the first agent composite preference value is the product of the first agent preference value and the first dynamic preference value.

146. (New) The method of claim 141, wherein the first agent preference value is a function of a personal desirability of the first agent for servicing the first work type.

147. (New) The method of claim 141, wherein in step (g) the first agent is added by the agent assignor to a pool of agents qualified to service the first work type and in step (h) the first agent is not added by the agent assignor to the pool of agents.

148. (New) The method of claim 141, wherein the first dynamic and agent preference values are nonzero and wherein the first dynamic preference value is a function of a first service level value for the first work type, the first service level value being measured over a selected period of time.

149. (New) The method of claim 141, wherein the first dynamic and agent preference values are nonzero and further comprising:

(j) the agent assignor, when the first agent composite value is equal to the first agent threshold value, finding the first agent to be qualified to service the first work type.

150. (New) The method of claim 141, further including the agent assignor not performing step (e) and finding the first agent to the qualified to service the first work type, when the first agent's preference value for the first work type is greater than the first agent threshold value for the first work type.

151. (New) A contact center, comprising:

5 a preference evaluator operable to determine and select a state of the contact center from among a plurality of differing contact center states and, based on the selected state of the contact center, select a composite preference value function from among a plurality of differing composite preference value functions, each composite preference value function being a function of a dynamic preference value and an agent preference value; and

10 an agent assignor operable to select a first agent and a first work type and/or a first work item of the first work type, determine a composite preference value using the selected composite preference value function, and, based on the determined composite preference value, assign the first agent to service contacts of the first work type and/or the first work item, wherein the determined composite preference value is associated with at least one of (i) the first work type, (ii) the first agent, and (iii) the first work item.

152. (New) The contact center of claim 151, wherein the state of the work processing facility is a function of a degree of achievement of one or more objectives.

153. (New) The contact center of claim 152, wherein the one or more objectives comprise at least one of a selected degree of allocation of service level performance in excess of an associated goal, a selected degree of utilization of agents, a selected degree of dampening of fluctuations in service level attainment, a selected degree of dampening of fluctuations in server idleness, and a selected mode-specific behavior.

154. (New) The contact center of claim 151, wherein the first work type and/or the first work item has an associated first dynamic preference value and the first agent has an associated first agent preference value and first agent threshold value for the first work typ, wherein the first dynamic preference value reflects the contact center's preference for
5 processing of work items of the first work type in comparison to processing work items of work types other than the first work type, and wherein the first agent threshold value measures the first agent's lack of proficiency in servicing the first work type and/or selected work item in the first work type.

155. (New) The contact center of claim 152, wherein the agent assignor is further operable to determine, as a function of the first dynamic preference and first agent preference values, a first agent composite preference value for the first work type, compare the first agent composite preference value with the first agent threshold value,
5 when the first agent composite preference value exceeds the first agent threshold value, find the first agent to the qualified to service the first work type, and, when the first agent composite preference value is less than the first agent threshold value, find the first agent to be unqualified to service the first work type.

156. (New) The contact center of claim 155, wherein the first dynamic preference value is a function of at least one of a service level value for the work type, a queue condition for the work type, an alarm condition for the work type, and an answer delay for the work type, a desired service level for the work type, a call abandonment rate
5 for the work type, and an operator intervention value for the work type.

157. (New) The contact center of claim 155, wherein the first dynamic preference value is a function of at least one of a service level value for the work type, a queue condition for the work type, and an answer delay for the work type.

158. (New) The contact center of claim 155, wherein the first dynamic and agent preference values are nonzero and wherein the first agent composite preference value function is the sum of the first agent's preference value and the first dynamic preference value.

159. (New) The contact center of claim 155, wherein the first dynamic and agent preference values are nonzero and wherein the first agent composite preference value is the product of the first agent preference value and the first dynamic preference value.

160. (New) The contact center of claim 155, wherein the first agent preference value is a function of a personal desirability of the first agent for servicing the first work type.

161. (New) The contact center of claim 155, wherein the first agent is added by the agent assignor to a pool of agents qualified to service the first work type and in step (h) the first agent is not added by the agent assignor to the pool of agents.

162. (New) The contact center of claim 155, wherein the first dynamic and agent preference values are nonzero and wherein the first dynamic preference value is a function of a first service level value for the first work type, the first service level value being measured over a selected period of time.

163. (New) The contact center of claim 155, wherein the first dynamic and agent preference values are nonzero and wherein the agent assignor is further operable, when the first agent composite value is equal to the first agent threshold value, to find the first agent to be qualified to service the first work type.

164. (New) The contact center of claim 155, wherein the agent assignor does not find the first agent to the qualified to service the first work type, when the first agent's preference value for the first work type is greater than the first agent threshold value for the first work type.